

Limiting witness fees to travel of more than 50 miles

HB 521 by Gallego/Sims

DIGEST: HB 521 would have limited witness fees in criminal cases to witnesses who traveled more than 50 miles from home to reach the court. (Under current law, witnesses may be compensated only if they reside in a different county or state from the court.)

**GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:** " . . . There is no estimate of the amount that this bill will cost the state. At a time when the state treasury is in a deficit, this should not become law."

RESPONSE: Rep. Pete Gallego, author of HB 521, said the bill probably would have *saved* money, because witnesses who crossed a county line but only traveled a few miles would no longer have been eligible for witness fees. Current law depends on the arbitrary factor of whether the witness lives in a different county — basing eligibility for fees on whether the witness traveled more than 50 miles would have been more fair, said Rep. Gallego.

NOTES: HB 521 was analyzed in the May 9 *Daily Floor Report*.